

WRITING YOUR SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION ESSAY

1. Plan ahead

- Don't procrastinate!
- Give yourself plenty of time to review and edit your essay
- Be aware of the deadline date (i.e.: received vs. postmark)

2. Talk about your accomplishments

- Be clear and to the point
- Don't brag or over-sell yourself

3. State your need

- What is your financial situation? Do you work? Do you receive support from your family? Do you receive financial aid?

4. Keep it simple

- Don't use unnecessary words (i.e., don't use three words when one will do)
- Don't include unnecessary information just to "fill the page"

5. Make it easy on your reader

- Have someone else read your essay for clarity
- Write complete sentences and paragraphs
- SPELL CHECK your essay – make sure words are used correctly (i.e.: "two," "to," "too," or "there," "their," or "they're;" "its" or "it's," etc.)

ORGANIZE YOUR THOUGHTS....

- Who are you? Why are you who you are?
- What are you doing? What have you done?
- Where are you now? Where are you going? How are you going to get there?
- Why do you need a scholarship? How will it make a difference?
- How did you make the decision to continue your education?

ESSAY OUTLINE:

1. Introductory sentence
 - a. State your name
 - b. What quarter you are in at Pierce College

2. Educational Objectives and Career Goals
 - a. Identify your major
 - b. Why did you choose this major?
 - c. What will you do with a degree in this field?
 - d. What career path have you chosen?

Example: *I have always enjoyed working with computers and I love to write. I'm pursuing a career in technological writing; this will allow me to pursue both interests - focusing on a viable career and doing something that I enjoy.*

3. Brief Background
 - a. Who are you? (not your name) – family, children, siblings, etc.
 - b. How did you get to where you are today?
 - c. What is important to you?
 - Insert extra-curricular interests, volunteer work, hobbies – things that make you stand out or are unusual.
 - Academic Accomplishments: GPA, level of difficulty of courses taken, types of courses taken, etc.

Examples:

During my free time, I volunteer at the Boys and Girls Club of Tacoma as a Big Sister.

Much of my free time is spent with my children, teaching them by example that education is important.

I am currently enrolled in 16 credit hours and I work two part-time jobs.

4. Need

- a. Why do you need a scholarship?
- b. How will it make a difference to you?

Examples:

Although I work two part-time jobs, I find it difficult to meet the financial demands of supporting myself and paying for an education. A scholarship will allow me to continue with school in the fall.

My parents provide me with room and board, but because I have younger brothers and sisters, they cannot help me with my educational expenses. The money I earn at the car wash part-time is barely enough to cover my books and supplies. A scholarship would help a great deal.

Receiving a scholarship would allow me to reduce the number of hours that I work at the daycare, which would then allow me more time to concentrate on my studies.

5. Conclusion

- Wrap it up with a simple sentence or two. You can include how your education to date has made a difference to you. End with a “thank you for allowing me the opportunity to apply.”

WRITING YOUR ESSAY:

Take the outline and begin with the first sentence (which may be the most difficult) and then just write to include everything you think is important. Don't worry about the length of the essay at this point. Use your outline as a guide.

1. First Sentence (the most difficult part)
 - Who, What, Where, When, Why

Example:

My name is Paula Henson and I am (applying, seeking, asking) for a scholarship for the Fall Quarter 2015.

My educational objective is to graduate in 2016 with an Associates Degree in Marketing (or transfer to the University of Washington and obtain a degree in Business to pursue a career in Accounting).

2. Now go back and look at what you've written. Read it for content and organization of the information. At this point, it is probably too long. What can you eliminate and/or incorporate? Are you redundant? Are you too brief? Does this essay paint an accurate picture of YOU?
3. SPELL CHECK – SPELL CHECK – SPELL CHECK
4. Have someone else read your essay. Is it you? What do they think?
5. Do you like what it says about you? Reread it one last time and SPELL CHECK it again!

REMEMBER: The essay is your chance to communicate your needs, accomplishments, goals, etc. The scholarship reviewers should be able to read your essay and feel as if they know you personally.